

Public Safety Committee Meeting
July 2, 2008

Item #1

ORDERED THAT the Public Safety Committee meet with the Parks Superintendent to discuss his concerns with vandalism and destruction of property in city parks.

Item #2

ORDERED THAT the Public Safety Committee meet with the Police Chief to discuss the Justice Assistance Grant

Item #3

ORDERED that the Public Safety Committee meet to discuss the needs of the Police Department at the Public Safety Complex

Item #4

Minutes



CHICOPEE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

ACCEPTED

MEMBERS

Ronald Belair, Chairman
Robert J. Zygarowski, Vice-Chairman
Fred Krampits
Dino Brunetti
Shane Brooks

MINUTES July 2, 2008

The following are the minutes of a public hearing held Monday, July 2, 2008 at 6:00 PM in the Aldermanic Chambers, Fourth Floor, City Hall Annex, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013.

Members Present

Belair, Zygarowski, Krampits, Brunetti, Brooks

Also Present

Alderman Tillotson, Timothy O'Grady (President, Patrolmen's Union Local 401), Chief John Ferraro (Chief of Police), Stanley Walczak (Superintendent of Parks), Garry Ziemba and Bobby Hart (Both Parks Commissioners), Earl Desrochers (City Messenger),

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

ITEM #1

ORDERED THAT the Public Safety Committee meet with the Parks Superintendent to discuss his concerns with vandalism and destruction of property in city parks

Stan Walczak stated lately there have been many problems with vandalism at the city parks especially at Szot Park. It is costing the city money every time this happens, the cost of paint etc.

Alderman Belair asked if it is possible that any of this is gang related

Chief Ferraro stated yes, maybe. Just need some of the police and also the public to keep an eye out and call when something may be happening. For example; if someone was to knock over a table, it will be much easier to see but when it comes to painting barrels it is difficult to see. All it takes is 5 minutes to do any of these things. He stated it must be known to the public what is going on and to enforce people to call when they see damage being done and their phone call can be anonymous.

Stan stated having more police on the watch and possibly step out of the car to walk around parks as well

Chief Ferraro stated they are trying to get more guys out on bikes and has heard that kids from Springfield are coming over into Chicopee's own Dana Park as well as others.

Alderman Brooks stated maybe having a system such as the "Neighborhood Watch". Could send something out to all residents, the more aware people are the better off the city is. Also let it be known that all calls are strictly anonymous so no one will feel intimidated.

Alderman Brunetti stated a flyer is a great idea, educated the community and protects it.

Alderman Zygarowski asked if there is a policy for out of town persons to use the city parks

Stan answered there are absolutely no restrictions concerning that

Alderman Zygarowski asked if the city can make people pay a fee for example, Szot Park is beginning to be taken over but other groups of kids.

Stan stated it is very hard to do

Alderman Zygarowski asked if once the city gets a grant, does it cover the bikes and motorcycles for the police in the parks

Chief Ferraro stated it does and that is what they've been trying to do and still plan on doing.

Alderman Brooks stated that is a great idea to keep as many Chicopee kids as possible in our own parks but it is a nightmare when you have 15yr olds without and type of identification

Alderman Tillotson asked about the 4 resource officers that are in schools, where are they now and why can't they be at the parks during the summer

Chief Ferraro stated they can't be because they are in probation or other things. They also go on vacation during the summer considering they do not have any time off during the school year starting from September and ending in June

Motion to:

- 1.) Police and Park Department develop a flyer to send out to CELD rate payers for problems in the parks. Encourage residents to call when they see a problem.
- 2.) Chief will work with Special Police to try to get them to work the parks for extra free details

CC: Jeff Cady

Motion accepted. 5-0 Favorable

ITEM #2

ORDERED THAT the Public Safety Committee meet with the Police Chief to discuss the Justice Assistance Grant

Chief Ferraro stated they need a new target system on the range. The tracking isn't functioning right so instead of shooting 50 yards they need to walk closer, there are just so many issues. Also a work station with computers if there is extra money left over.

Motion to approve accepting grant and allow to be used for new target system on range in station

Motion accepted. 5-0 favorable

ITEM #3

ORDERED that the Public Safety Committee meet to discuss the needs of the Police Department at the Public Safety Complex

Earl Desrochers stated the units put on in 1995 went out of business and all it did was give the city new coils and it has had to of been changed 3 times already. Since day 1 there have been problems. As of now, plans and specs are being worked on and hopefully by the end of the month it will be done so contractors can start to be looked at and hired. The compressor just recently went again too. It was struck by lightening and the warrantee was up by 1 month.

Chief Ferraro stated that is fine as long as B&G can keep the station up until then. Everyone is suffering. He stated everyone must keep in mind there are only 2 windows in the station basically only for sunlight, it is unbearable not to mention the computers keep failing because of the heat. Everyone has been bringing in their own AC's and fans from their homes. Also, no one can walk into the room without walking side ways; there is no room to work. He stated he has brought this issue up years ago and feels "he who hesitates loses" This is a big problem and needs to be taken care of. The city needs to give the police the tools they need to do their job correctly; can't just throw them guns. This is for the safety of the community. The Special Police don't even have a conference room anymore and they are always taking rooms and splitting them into 2 because there just isn't enough room.

Alderman Brooks stated he understands the Chief and he just wants the best for the City. The police need the proper tools to do their job. It is about time to do something about this. He stated the Chief has only asked for just enough to get by and it is definitely time for a change.

Chief Ferraro stated he would like to say that the past 17 years he has lived within his budget, never asking for more then he needs. Also, this isn't just for him and the police but for the City. He stated the public needs to be proud of our station and our police force. Either the old station needs to be made right of there needs to be a new one built.

Alderman Brunetti stated he feels comfortable that he and the rest of the board think it is time to get something done and fast.

Alderman Belair stated that part of this meeting is to go to the Mayor with all of this. He stated he feels expanding the existing the station will just be problematic.

Alderman Krampits stated he agrees. The working conditions need to be better then they are. Also, technology since then to now is totally different and will keep expanding. The old building needs too much updating for that.

Tim O'Grady stated the police force as well as technology and everything else has expanded within the past 25yrs but the station has not, not only structural but the engineering part too. For a while, the station lost phone service and all incoming calls had to be transferred

from a different city which caused nothing but a hard time and many headaches. The building is also over 40 years old and police radios have gone out and there is no contingency set up if something was to happen. Also, the ventilation system very worried about it. City Hall has is but Public Safety doesn't, Public Safety should be a high priority too. Water pours down into records, sewer gas into the locker room and lead from the bullets in the basement that everyone has to breathe in. It is embarrassing to the City, the station, the officers and even the public. If we have comfortable conditions to work in it will keep morals high and clear minds with we need. He then stated many of us are proud to serve the City but we need to keep the morals up and keep up all of the equipment. It's going to blow up and shut down if nothing is done and won't be able to get another grant if that was to happen.

William Jebb (Captain on the midnight shift) stated for the liability of the sewer gas in the locker room and also the prisoners could be a huge problem too. For example if there was a person pulled over for running a red light and they have a warrant out for not showing up for jury duty on a Friday they have to stay in lock up all weekend and would have to deal with those conditions of the station. Some individuals many have respiratory issues where we would then have to bring them back and forth to the hospital to get checked out. A grievance has been talked about but was told things would be fixed by the end of June but since then nothing has been done. He stated the station is in desperate need for this and it is too small to work in, something must be done. Again, would hate to see something happen to a prisoner with a respiratory problem.

Paul Gay?? Stated it is time for a new building. He spends a lot of his time in courts and there is no room for evidence, need better filing so there will not be any worries about losing cases.

Alderman Zygarowski stated he has been there and understands. The AC hasn't been right since 1976. Doesn't understand how we can air condition 2 brand new high schools but not in the Public Safety building.

Earl stated needs 2 new ones, a selection committee, get bids, equipment and ordered. It's the time factor that is the problem. Stated when he said it would be ready for the end of June, he really believed it would be but something happened and all major projects were put on hold. He stated he was also told he must get 3 different quotes, can't just go directly to B&G.

Alderman Zygarowski stated that this issue has been going on for too many years. Public Safety should be priority #1. Listening to everything, the City needs a brand new building altogether.

Alderman Zygarowski then asked to expand the building, is there any idea of the cost

Chief Ferraro stated about 3.2 million but there are many other things too. So maybe looking at about 5 million

Alderman Zygarowski then asked what about a new building

Chief Ferraro stated they haven't talked about that

Alderman Zygarowski stated will support any way possible. Need to get that through to the Mayor too. Our schools are in great shape but we need a new Public Safety Complex.

Chief Ferraro stated it will be costly but everyone needs to be looking in the same direction is something like this was to happen.

Motion made to request to Mayor to form a task force to study the needs of the Public Safety Complex possibility for expanding or building a new station for the sake of public safety. To include members from own Public Safety Committee. To be completed by October 1, 2008.

Motion accepted. 5-0 favorable

ITEM #4

Minutes – February 25, 2008.

Motion made by Alderman Zygarowski to approve. Seconded by Alderman Krampits

Motion passed. 5-0 favorable

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.